



# Manor Green Primary Academy

## Aspire. Achieve. Succeed.

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Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear parents and carers,

I am writing to you today to share information around precautionary steps we are taking across school to safeguard all children and adults and to share some advice about talking to your child about the current situation with regards to the 'corona virus'. Children will have, of course, heard about it in the national news or even overheard conversations with adults so being open and honest with them is key.

**Staggered Playtimes and Lunchtimes:** Following advice, we have taken the decision to stagger playtime and lunchtime until further notice. Children will have breaktime and lunchtime in their year groups. We will ensure that children have plenty of time to eat together and enjoy a break outside with their friends.

**Assemblies:** We have taken the decision to cancel assemblies until further notice; this includes our Monday morning and celebration assemblies. Collective worship will take place in classes as usual.

**Deep Clean:** As a school, we have ensured that high priority areas receive a more focused clean over the past weeks; this extends to door handles, high traffic areas and, of course, bathroom facilities. Children are also being encouraged to be extra vigilant around their own personal hygiene with an unprecedented amount of hand sanitiser and hand soap being used across school. We also have a full 'deep clean' scheduled for the Easter break. This deep clean has been scheduled for some time as part of our continued cleaning cycle but is quite timely given the current situation.

**Parents' Evening:** Following advice from Focus-Trust, informed by the guidance from the Department for Public Health we are postponing the upcoming parents' evening events. We will inform you, as soon as possible, about alternative arrangements.

**Music Festival:** The Focus-Trust has also made the difficult decision to cancel the upcoming Music Festival. We know that many of our children will be looking forward to this event but, as we're sure you understand, we must ensure that the safety of all children and adults comes first.

**School Closure:** At the time of writing this letter, we are open as normal. We are following all advice from Public Health England and the Department for Education and are taking as many precautionary steps as possible (as detailed above). We will continue to update you as and when we need to, please ensure that we have an up to date contact number on our records for you as information will be shared via bit.ly link as usual.

Please see overleaf for some tips and advice about talking to your children about the coronavirus.

**'Care, Share, Fair, Dare, Healthy & Happy'**



Part of the Focus Academy Trust



## Tips for Talking to your Child

**Start somewhere:** As a parent, there are always conversations you'd prefer not to have with your children. And when something as out-of-the-blue and unknown as the corona virus strikes, it's hard to know where to begin. Especially as it's clear that the scientists still don't have the answers.

- But children need you to talk to them.
- They're relying on you for information and, more importantly, support.
- Open the conversation as soon as possible. It doesn't matter if you don't get far. They'll know it's OK to come back to it when something worries them - when someone they know starts feeling poorly, for example.
- It doesn't matter either that you don't have all the answers, as long as you reassure them that people across the world are doing amazing things - coming together, staying apart - to try to combat the virus. And you are following all the advice and doing all you can for them.

**Be prepared to listen:** There's information everywhere. Your children have access to the knowledge and opinions of the rest of the world via the internet. It can be difficult to distinguish truth from misinformation. Listen to what your children have picked up.

- The tech platforms are making a big effort to take down false stories about coronavirus - but they can't control private messaging. So, it's still possible for children to have access to information that may worry them but simply isn't true.
- Of course, it's a good thing that there's so much expert knowledge available. We can all listen to different scientists and compare countries' responses, and we can see what seems to be working in real-time.
- That doesn't mean you have to sift through all this and work out the answers: you'd need a degree in microbiology for that.
- What children mainly want to hear from their parents is that they're on their side. Make sure they know that you and all the people who care about them are doing what they came to protect them, and look after each other.
- If they think they're not being listened to, kids turn off. So your job is mainly (at least initially) to hear what they have to say. Let them know you're ready to engage with their opinions and concerns.

**Trust yourself:** As a parent, you're one of the leading experts on your child.

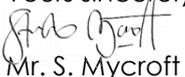
- Reassure them that children are much less affected by the virus than older people. They may be worried about people they know - grandparents, or people with underlying conditions. They may have asthma or other complicating conditions themselves. Make sure you know what the advice is, so you can promise them that everything is being done. Reassure them that everything will be done to protect and look after children.
- Use the opportunity to start good habits of hand-washing, which will stand them in good stead long after this is all over. For younger children, you can make a game of it, singing songs while they wash.
- Involve older children in planning for self-isolation. What food do you need? What films and games and activities will keep you occupied if schools have to close?
- It's easy to feel you don't know enough to be authoritative. It's fine to be honest about your own uncertainties, as long as you are calming and positive. Reassure them that this will pass, and we will all pick up the pieces.

You know how to be a parent – that's skill enough to be going on with. Further advice and guidance from ChildMind.org can be found [here](#).

We will, of course, continue to keep you updated. Thank you to all involved in ensuring that we are keeping our children and safe and well.

Thank you for your continued help and support.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. S. Mycroft  
Vice Principal